James Monroe
Elementary School

Madera Unified School District
http://www.madera.k12.ca.us/

Michelle Pecina, Principal
Presented at the October 2003
  Principals' Roundtable Webcast
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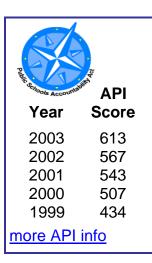(559) 674-5679
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Central California, Urban, K-6, 963 students

Percent Free/Reduced Lunch: 94%

English Learners: 58%

Demographics:
American Indian/Alaska Native	0%
Asian	0%
Pacific Islander	0%
Filipino	0%
Hispanic/Latino	90%
African American	3%
White (not Hispanic)	6%

Year	API Score
2003	613
2002	567
2001	543
2000	507
1999	434

more API info

Special Recognition

- Golden Bell Award in 1997 and 2001
- United States Department of Education awarded the principal as California's National Distinguished Principal of the Year (November 2003)

Central Focuses of School Reform:

- The principal decided it was necessary to provide ongoing professional development in order to turn the school around. Therefore, she established a comprehensive system for professional development that supports teachers' abilities to add to their repertoire of teaching approaches or strategies. If students are not meeting the standards, the teaching strategies must change to improve student achievement. To improve student achievement, the teacher needs the most advanced teaching strategies or tools possible. Once these tools are added to the teaching repertoire, teachers are expected to fully utilize the array of new tools they have acquired. The teachers have done this and the reward has been a consistent increase in the school's API scores. The principal is convinced that in order for continuous improvement to occur, professional development is vital.
- Grade level collaborative meetings that take place almost weekly are a key element supporting teachers in the continual improvement and refinement of their work to improve student achievement. The teachers also focus on powerful, purposeful, ongoing professional development that is supported and sustained as their learnings are applied during these planning meetings.

During these meetings, the teachers jointly plan their approach to incorporating the standards in, for example, the next week's reading lessons. If students are having difficulty, quality interventions are determined. These interventions range from tutoring during or after school, to tutoring during intersessions.

- Clearly, much work had to be done to improve student achievement. The staff committed itself to work as a team to analyze student data and to develop high quality interventions for those students who needed additional support.

Additional Information:
- During the change process, it is important to take "baby steps." Particularly in the beginning, change is a gradual process, and it is critical to avoid allowing the staff to become overwhelmed. The steps the principal used for the school's reform work are detailed in the work of Bryan Smigh.
- The principal clearly communicated her expectations to the staff. As the reform work proceeded, it became increasingly a collaborative endeavor. The team approach is grounded in the principal's guiding philosophy that "working together as a team to accomplish goals guides my day-to-day work. We need to set goals and align our resources to help students achieve academically."
- Purposeful goal setting is not exclusive to the realm of adult staff at the school. The principal is a proponent of the Baldridge principles, especially those empowering students to determine their own mission and goals.

Research/Resources:
Marzano, Robert J., Debra J. Pickering, Jane E. Pollock. *Classroom Instruction that Works: Research-Based Strategies for Increasing Student Achievement.* 2001.
Payne, Ruby K., *Framework for Understanding Poverty.* 1998.
Senge, Peter M., Charlotte Roberts, Richard B. Ross with Bryan Smigh. *The Fifth Fieldbook: Strategies and Tools for Building a Learning Organization.* 1994.

Web Links:
- School Site Web Page
- School Site API Data
- School Site CBEDS Data